

sermon: the cost of Compassion

NOTES

Lights down:

Show DVD Start Small. Think Big: One Act. [Optional]

Introduction:

Outline that it's on God's heart to remove all from poverty and especially the least of these.

Reflect that there's a stirring in the church towards poverty and justice issues.

Consider something like:

"First of all if you're a Christian, turn to the person next to you and say "I'm a Christian and I love Jesus."

Again, turn to them and say "I hate poverty and injustice and I intend to do something about it."

You can't say the first and mean it and not do the second. I hope to stir you up a little today."

Jesus set out his manifesto in Luke 4: 16-21

16 He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."

20 Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. **21** He began by saying to them, "Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing."

Other key scriptures for me are:

James 1:27, Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.

Prov 31:8-9, Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy.

Psalms 82:3-4, Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.

There is so much to do. Some statistics:

- 1 Billion children live in poverty (half the world's children)
- 1.2 million children are trafficked each year for sexual exploitation and cheap labour.

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- 1.4 Billion people live in extreme poverty (less than \$1.25 (U.S) a day, 75p a day). That's 26 per cent of the population. **BUT in 1981 it was 52 per cent**
- Cut in half in a generation.
- It's now our turn to eradicate it in this generation.

What is “compassion”?

Give examples of when you felt pity/sorry for someone. Was it really compassion?

What does compassion mean?

What the dictionary says

Oxford Compact dictionary

- Sympathetic pity and concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others.

Cambridge dictionary

- A strong feeling of sympathy and sadness for the suffering or bad luck of others and a desire to help them:

What does the Bible say?

The Greek word for “compassion” is used only 12 times in the New Testament and nine are attributable to Jesus.

Transliteration	Pronunciation
splagchnizomai	splänkh-n '-zo-m (Key)

To be moved as to one's bowels, hence to be moved with compassion, or have compassion (for the bowels were thought to be the seat of love and pity).

Read Luke 10:25-37 from the New King James Version

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, in verse 33 when he saw the half dead Jew he had compassion on him (at least in the New King James he did!)

I think if he could have, he'd have asked for exactly what he got from the Samaritan. Love your neighbour as yourself. He'd have paid the price to get himself out of this place and to be made well... but he couldn't.

He risked his own life to give an unconscious Jew a voice!

Other examples of where the word 'compassion' is used:

Feeding the five thousand; Mark 6:34 (NIV) Jesus changed his plans!

Healing the leper Mark 1: 40-42 (NIV) Jesus touched him and healed him. Touching lepers – what not the thing to do! Jesus violated all the cleanliness laws here. He did the most vile thing imaginable!

Raising the widow's only son from the dead (NKJ) Touching the coffin meant he violated established religious cleanliness laws!

In all cases Jesus took action... sometimes costly action

This is His nature, to act in love and not count the cost. In Jesus love and action are freely given. James 2: 18 “...Show me your faith without deeds and I will show you my faith by what I do.”

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It's not sympathy or pity. It's more than that internal emotion. It's a feeling so deep that there is an absolute need to do something whatever the cost.

At the end of the service you are going to get an opportunity to act, to show Compassion. But before I draw this talk to a close please watch this.

Show DVD if you haven't already: Start Small. Think Big. (One Act)

So to conclude

Let's go right back to the reason for the parable of the Good Samaritan. Why was it told? Yes, to explain who our neighbour was but more importantly than that, the first question from the expert in the law asked was much more vital. He asked, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

Could there be a more important question for any of us?

Read Matthew 25:31-43.

God will separate His obedient followers from pretenders and unbelievers.

I'm not saying that we are saved by our deeds but **the evidence of our belief will not be found in which church we attend and how often but in how we treat those we encounter.**

How we treat our neighbour, how we treat the poor and the poorest of the poor.

How we followed Jesus' manifesto.

What we do for others and how we treat them is the real demonstration of our Christ-like heart.

If there is anyone here today who doesn't know Jesus as their Saviour but has been touched by what they've heard, I'd like you to raise your hand whilst our eyes are closed.

I pray that every one of you one day stands in front of Jesus and He says to you, "Thank you. When I was hungry you fed me. When I was thirsty you gave me something to drink. When I was a poor child you became my loving sponsor, you sponsored me and spoke hope and encouragement into my life."

Compassion, as I've explained, it isn't doing a one off act. We sometimes hear of compassion fatigue! But true compassion is a way of life. The Good Samaritan would do the same time and time again and, of course, so would Jesus!

Maybe you've thought about sponsoring a child, well today you can. Maybe you've been sponsoring a child for a while. Is the Direct Debit hurting? Could you sponsor another? Is God drawing you to do that?

If any of this is for you please come and see us at the table outside and/or complete the form on your seat and bring it with you.

Thank you and God bless you.

